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ABSTRACT

Sunken Meadow State Park provides a year round three-fold ecosystem (marine beach, salt marsh, and wooded upland) of 1,266 acres for Suffolk County (NY) teachers and students to use as a site for outdoor education activities. While teachers can rely on the support of the Outdoor Learning Laboratories' staff for aid in emergencies, for clarifying unforeseeable contingencies, and for providing materials and equipment, teachers are expected to be self-sufficient leaders when bringing students to the Park. Therefore, teachers are required to complete a 30-hour summer inservice instruction program prior to bringing their students to the Park for a day-long class trip during the year. Successful completion of inservice training and implementation of a day-use program qualifies a teacher for participation in week-long residential camp experiences. In addition to detailing the teacher training program, this guide provides teachers with: background information on the formation of the Park and its present day flora and fauna; maps and directions for reaching the Park; safety, first aid, and emergency procedures; conservation practices; and descriptions of available instructional and audio-visual materials, including procedures for their care and storage. (NEC)

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Site Guide

to

Sunken Meadow State Park

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SCOPE

Outdoor Learning Laboratories

Expanding the Classroom into the Natural World

SITE GUIDE

to Sunken Meadow State Park

1973 revised 1978

SCOPE

Outdoor Learning Laboratories

Expanding the Classroom into the Natural World

SCOPE OUTDOOR LEARNING LABORATORIES

A cocperative educational program sponsored by SCOPE and the New York State Executive Department, Office of Parks and Recreation and the Long Island State Park and Recreation Commission.

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New York State Parks and Recreation
Orin Lehman, Commissioner

Long Island State Parks
and Recreation Commission

Belmont Lake State Park,
Babylon, New York
John G. Sheridan, General Manager

A regional educational program sponsored by BOCES I, BOCES II, and BOCES III of Suffolk County

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Smithtown, NY 11787
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Sunken Meadow State Park

Louis A. Biamon, Superintendent

William H. Moeller, Assistant Supervisor,
Park Operations

Harold Betts, Assistant Supervisor,
Park Operations

Telephone Number 269-4333

The Sunken Meadow State Parkway in Kings Park is 46 miles east of New York City. VIA

Northern and Sunken Meadow State Parkways

Sunken Meadow State Park includes the following:

Food stands, picnic areas, beach, bathhouse, three, 9-hole golf courses, athletic and playfields, nature trails, hiking, fishing, and bicycle paths.

Sunken Meadow State Park is open year-round.

Golf Courses: Open Tuesday through Sunday inclusive, April 1 to November 30 (Closed Monday, except Holidays)

Refreshment stands are open when parking field in area is open.

East Overlook refreshment stand open year-round.

Swimming in the Long Island Sound.

CONTENTS

Sunken Meadow State Park
- The Land Meets the Sea 1
- Road Directions Map to the Park 4
- Directions to the Outdoor Learning Laboratory. . 5
- Safety, First Aid, and Emergencies 6
- Equipment 8
- Map of the Sunken Meadow State Park 9

Special Instructional and Audio-Visual Equipment. . 11

Library 11

Care and Storage of Equipment and Materials 12

Environmental Resource Center 13

Instructional Supplies 14

Rain or Shine 14

Conservation Practices 15

Teacher Participation Plan 16
- Day-Use Inservice 18
- Implementation of the Day-Use Program 19
- Residential Inservice and Implementation 21
  - Residential Inservice 21
  - Residential Implementation 23

Inservice Credit for Participating Teacher 24

Teacher Participation in Supplementary Programs
- Saturday Optional Environmental Workshops . . . 24
- Regional and Subregional Environmental Workshops 25

SUNKEN MEADOW STATE PARK

The Land Meets the Sea

Immediately west of the mouth of the Nissequogue River, a hilly ridge slopes down toward Long Island Sound; the sandy beach and its dunes are being pressed inland by winds and waves; between the dunes and the foot of the ridge lies a marsh. This three-fold ecosystem--marine beach, salt marsh, and wooded upland--is preserved as Sunken Meadow State Park.

The ridge stands as part of the Harbor Hill moraine extending along Long Island's north shore to Orient Point, the later of the two moraines, which constitute the double spine of the island. Although some of the hilltops along this section of the moraine are exceptionally high, the ridge for thousands of years supported a hardwood forest which withstood the winds sweeping across Long Island Sound. On these high hills, today's oaks, hickories and birches are the descendants of a forest which sheltered troops of animals and throngs of birds. Although the large mammals are gone, the wooded heights now support many small animals and a great variety of birds.

When the Wisconsin glacier retreated, the valley which stretched from the ridge to what is now the continental mainland became an arm of the sea, and the rising waters edged the beach up the slope to where it now stands. The beach is sandy; winds and waves have created dunes. The interplay of land and sea taking place in three zones--the marine surf, the tidal beach, and the dry upper sands--makes for a continuing dynamic of slow change in the shore and meantime, provides a habitat which fluctuates with each tide. Seaweeds, fish, and mollusks in the surf--algae, crabs, and worms in the tidal zone--grasses, birds, and animals of the dunes--interwoven life forms balance on the razor's edge between land and sea.

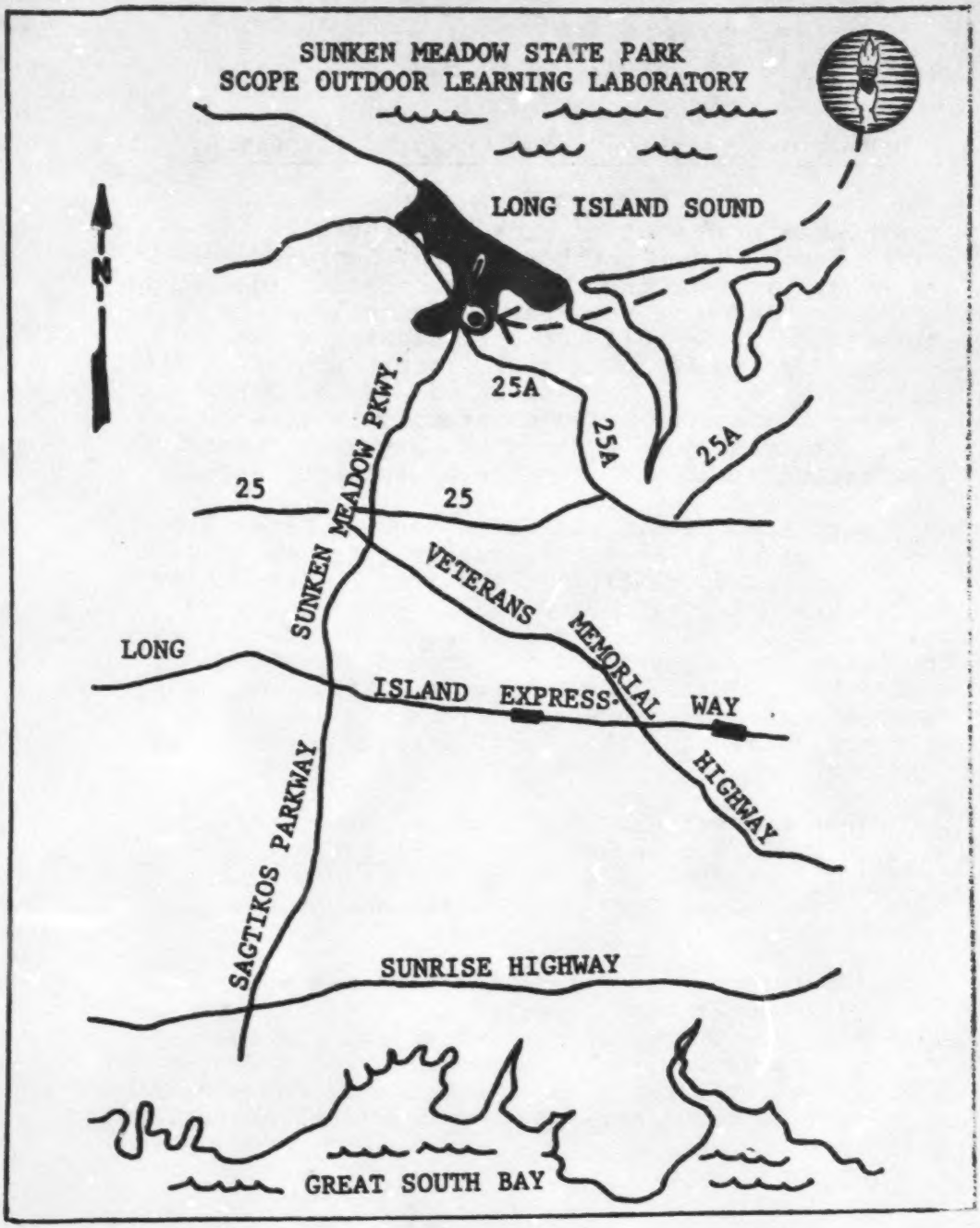
The Land Meets the Sea (continued)

Salt waters flowing in during high tides interpenetrate fresh waters running down from the hills and create a marshy meadow between the dunes and the foot of the ridge. The connected ponds of the marsh may well have been a tributary of the Nissequogue River during the eons when the river flowed far down the slope which is now the floor of the Sound; today the fresh-water aspects of the meadow are maintained by run-off from the heights about. Intermittent tidal flooding makes the fresh waters brackish or saline, transforming the meadow into a tidal marsh. A complex web of interrelationships among marine and terrestrial fauna and flora supports scores of life forms including forms unique to marshlands as well as many found elsewhere in land, fresh-water, or salt-water environments. Further, the marsh spawns species which reach adulthood only in other ecosystems, such as the sea. Probably no life source on earth is more fertile than a tidal marsh.

Woods, beach, and marsh for centuries provided the Nissequogue tribe of Algonquin Indians with bountiful food supplies as well as natural products such as the trunks of tulip trees for dugout canoes and guahog shells for wampum. In the seventeenth century, English settlers founded some of the nearby villages and the town of Smithtown, maintaining friendly relations with the Indians and learning from them about the natural resources of the area. Early in the American Revolution, British forces encamped along the ridge where the Outdoor Learning Laboratory now stands. General Washington sent a young officer, Nathan Hale, to gain information

about the deployment of the British; the place where Nathan Hale is said to have penetrated the lines is marked by a boulder. Over the years, the mouth of the Nissequogue, with its adjacent marshlands and hills, has been admired by many well known Americans, including statesman Daniel Webster, poet Walt Whitman, naturalist Robert Cushman Murphy, and planning director Lee Koppelman.

The present area of Sunken Meadow State Park owes its preservation to acquisition by New York State, which gradually purchased a number of parcels of land from private persons and the town of Smithtown. The park, comprised of 1,266 acres, is administered by the New York State Office of Parks and Recreation and the Long Island State Park and Recreation Commission.


SUNKEN MEADOW STATE PARK
SCOPE OUTDOOR LEARNING LABORATORY
LONG ISLAND SOUND
N
25A
25A
25A
25
25
SUNKEN MEADOW PKWY.
VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY
LONG ISLAND EXPRESS WAY
SAGTIKOS PARKWAY
SUNRISE HIGHWAY
GREAT SOUTH BAY

DIRECTIONS TO THE OUTDOOR LEARNING LABORATORY

Sunken Meadow State Park is entered by way of a toll booth at the northern end of Sunken Meadow State Parkway. During the summer months, in lieu of paying the entrance fee, participants identify themselves at the toll booth by signing in as sponsored by SCOPE. The first right turn after the toll booth leads to Parking Lot 5 and the Outdoor Learning Laboratory. The Laboratory is located under the trees just beyond the northwest corner of the parking field and down the blacktopped path.

Districts sending students and teachers to the Outdoor Learning Laboratory are expected to supply their own transportation to and from Sunken Meadow State Park. Arrival and departure times are essentially up to the discretion of the teacher as the Laboratory is operational from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Special arrangements to arrive can also be made with the Laboratory Director. The only restriction is that this park officially closes at sundown.

Teachers and district transportation directors will do well to remember that buses are not allowed on State Parkways. The map on the preceding page may be helpful in providing directions to bus drivers.

Bus trips to any field location are sometimes a dull, uneducational experience. This need not be so. Because of Long Island's history, glacial origin, topography, cultural setting and industry, a number of opportunities exist to make the ride to and from the Laboratory part of the total educational experience.

SAFETY, FIRST AID, AND EMERGENCIES

Emergency Telephone Numbers

Fire - Dial "0" (operator) and ask for the Kings Park Fire Department, informing the operator that this is an emergency.

State Park Police - MO9-2500

St. John's Smithtown Hospital, Route 25A, Smithtown - 360-2000

Smithtown General Hospital, Smithtown By-Pass and Route 111 - 979-4000

Accident or Illness

In the event that a child becomes ill or injured at the Laboratory site, the following steps should be taken.

1. Notify staff immediately concerning injury or illness.
2. For slight injuries, the first aid kit supplied by the Laboratory may be utilized.
3. In case of serious injury or illness, the teacher or a staff person will contact the school principal and the child's parent or guardian or the family physician. These names and telephone numbers are listed on the student's profile shee filed in the site office.
4. When neither parent or guardian nor physician can be reached in case of serious illness or injury, the teacher or a staff person will call one of the hospitals listed above.
5. After the emergency is over, the teacher will complete the accident report form provided by the Laboratory.

SAFETY, FIRST AID, AND EMERGENCIES (continued)

Fire Procedures

The Outdoor Learning Laboratory is constructed according to the approved code for school structures. The main entrance/exit is on the west side of the structure and two additional exits are on the east and west sides. Standard fire extinguishers are located at the slop sink and next to the front entrance. However, in the event of a fire, teachers are to have students exit at once and leave fire fighting to skilled professionals.

Safety and First Aid Reminders

As in any field experience, the teacher is legally responsible for the supervision and safety of each student within his/her charge. The outdoors hold some hazards which we forget exist when we become accustomed to an indoor learning environment. The Director of the Laboratory in his inservice program for participating teachers will provide reminders; however, with even the best advance preparation, cuts, bruises, scratches, insect bites and stings may occur. Teachers can help keep accidents to a minimum by discouraging running, jumping, and climbing and most especially by making sure that every child is within sight of an adult at all times.

EQUIPMENT

Teachers are requested (required) to submit their equipment requisition lists prior to class utilization of a Laboratory site. It is preferred that the Director be made aware of each teacher's material requirements during the planning session which would proceed their Laboratory participation. If for some reason this becomes impossible, the teacher may submit a requisition list by telephone or mail.

Reminder: Outdoor Learning Laboratory
Sunken Meadow State Park
P. O. Box 186
Kings Park, NY 11754
269-4343

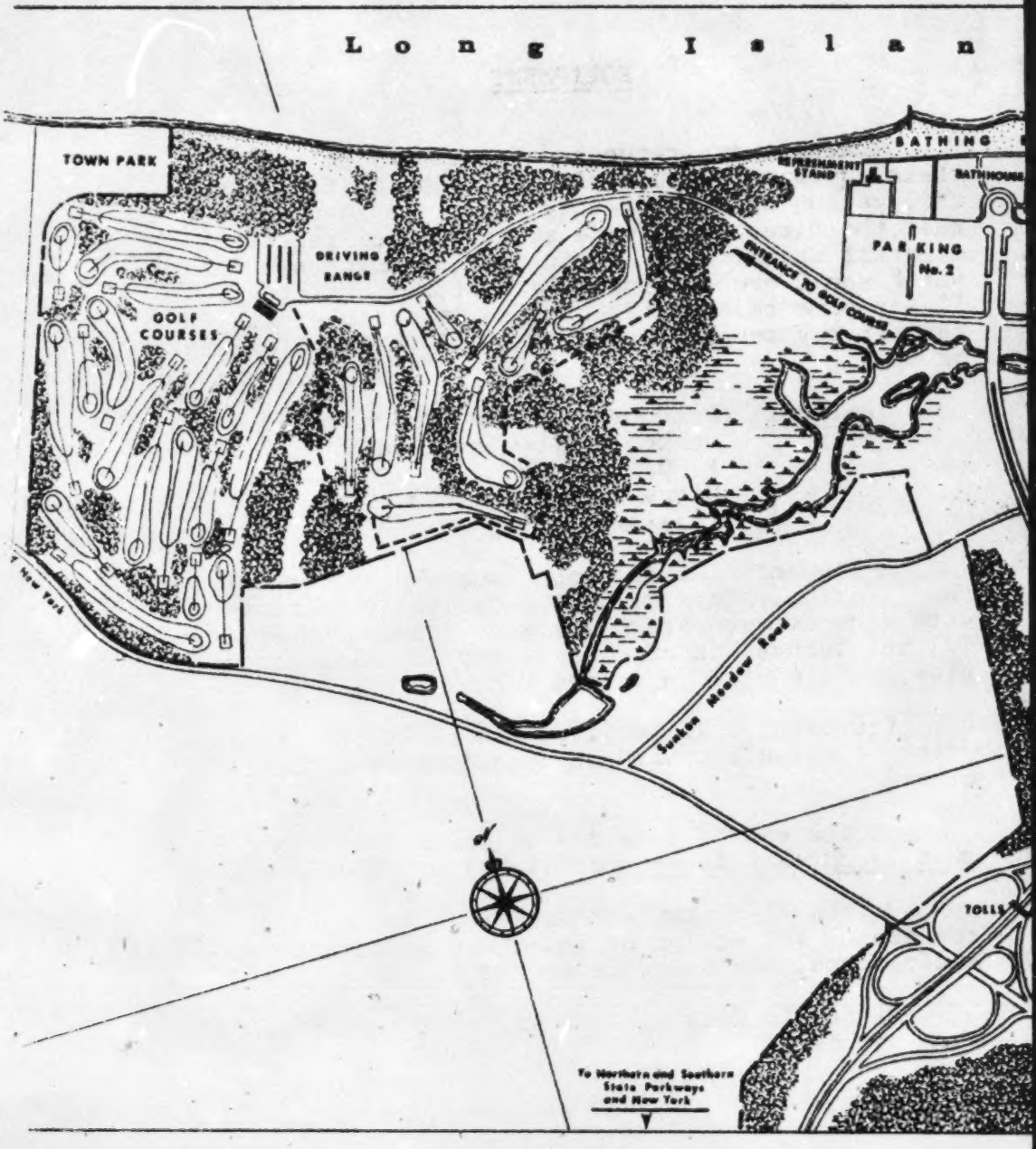
All quantities dispensed must be approved by the Director. This may not necessarily coincide with amounts requested, i.e., compasses requested - 12; but because other classes may be using compasses also, only 6 will be issued.

Equipment will be placed on tables or counters prior to class arrival and clearly marked for each class.

At the end of each day of usage, all equipment must be checked in by the teacher in charge.

On the clerk typists desk is a brown folder containing the equipment inventory at Sunken Meadow. Audio-visual equipment is stored in the office.

First aid kits will be given to each class when requested.


Long Island
TOWN PARK
BATHING
REFRESHMENT STAND
BATHHOUSE
PARKING No. 2
DRIVING RANGE
ENTRANCE TO GOLF COURSES
GOLF COURSES
Sunken Meadow Road
TOLLS
To Northern and Southern State Parkways and New York

Sound
C
B
A
BOARDWALK
REFRESHMENT STAND
PARKING No. 2
PLAY AREA
PARKING No. 4
REFRESHMENT STAND and COMFORT STATION
Maintenance Building
BRIDLE PATH
PARKING No. 5
A -- Salt Marsh
B -- Dunes
C -- Marine Beach
D -- Hardwood Forest
SUNKEN MEADOW STATE PARK
KINGS PARK, L.I.
LONG ISLAND STATE PARK
AND RECREATION COMMISSION
BELMONT LAKE STATE PARK
BABYLON, NEW YORK
Site of SCOPE's
Outdoor Learning Laboratory

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL AND AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT

Currently the Laboratory has on hand special instructional and audio-visual equipment which is accessible to teachers and students. This equipment includes:

35 mm slide projector
16 mm sound projector
Specialized craft equipment
Photocopy equipment
Rear projection screen
Weather console & equipment
Overhead projector
Filmstrip projector
Student microscopes (10X, 40X, 100X)
Portable easels
Rolling measures
Rock tumblers
Coring equipment
Visual makers
Globes
Maps (Long Island)
Sieves
Binoculars
Compasses
Pack sacks
Scales
Presses
Nets
Terrariums
Aquaria
Tape recorders
Record player
Micro projectors
Laminating press
Hand lenses

LIBRARY

The Outdoor Learning Laboratory located in Sunken Meadow State Park has a very extensive resource library for teacher use.

Subjects include Long Island history, Indian life, botany, poetry, myths as well as creative project text books.

To obtain any of these resource materials, please fill out a card with your name, school, telephone number, books borrowed and expected return date.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS: CARE AND STORAGE

Certain equipment in the Laboratory requires a preliminary "check-out" to insure its most effective use. This familiarization process is part of the inservice workshop program for the teacher participants and continued throughout the year.

The interior of the Laboratory building is laid out so that materials, supplies, and audio-visual equipment are readily available. Large storage cabinets are marked on the outside with their contents and a system is used to identify contents of the individual storage bins. With a brief orientation, students should be able to obtain materials on their own for use in individual or group work while indoors. This material use carries with it a responsibility, however, it is expected that all materials will be returned to the proper storage area clean and suitable for use by others.

Taking Equipment Outside

Teachers and students are encouraged to take instructional equipment outside. Now all is durable but outdoor use is completely in keeping with the philosophy of the Laboratory. Better to wear the equipment out by continued instructional use than to have it in perfect shape on a stock room shelf. A system to account for the whereabouts of specific pieces of equipment is operating in the Laboratory. This is done by the requisition sheets distributed to you.

CARE AND STORAGE (continued)

Security

The Laboratory facility is protected from vandalism and theft by an electronic detection system. Should your class wish to leave materials overnight, they should be safe until you return to the program site. However, SCOPE cannot be held responsible for materials or equipment left overnight.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE CENTER

The environmental resource areas of the facility are designed to provide a wide range of information sources.

The following are examples of the materials found here:

- Study modules
- Electronic L.I. Indian map
- Current periodicals
- Motion pictures
- Filmstrips and slides
- Charts, maps, books and identification guides
- Government publications
- Instructional models
- Recordings
- Flash cards
- Weather console
- Metric work study area
- Botanical displays
- Fungi displays
- Soil displays
- Shell displays

Material from this area is available for students and teachers both in and out of the Laboratory on a rapid check-out/check-in procedure. Simply notify the Laboratory staff of your usage then return it to area from which it was borrowed.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES

Although the Laboratory facility contains consumable instructional materials for student use, teachers are asked to "back-up" these materials with supplies brought from their individual schools. This is particularly true in that teacher will have a firm idea of supply needs having completed most of the planning for their students' experiences in the Laboratory.

RAIN OR SHINE

During moderately inclement weather, the Outdoor Learning Laboratory program goes on. Seriously inclement weather may cause your school or the Laboratory to close. Should your school be open, please call the Outdoor Learning Laboratory by 8:30 A.M. to nofity us as to your plans for the day. In most cases, you will be contacted directly by the Laboratory Director earlier in the morning.

In the event of either your school's or the Laboratory's closing due to inclement weather, every effort will be made to provide another opportunity to utilize the Laboratory as soon as possible.

CONSERVATION PRACTICES

Although a good portion of the State Park is available to aid the teacher in his/her instructional program, it must be remembered that continued use of any area by a group can result in exploitation and damage to the area. This damage could be to plant and animal life or to physical features of the Park. The removal of ground cover, the compaction of soil, the erosion of areas due to heavy foot traffic, the continual snapping off of twig and bush specimens and over collecting of any specific plant or animal species, are just some examples of damage to the Park setting that is difficult, if not impossible to repair. In order for the Park to remain as an almost perfect instructional setting, teachers can assist by making their students more aware of the proper treatment of the Park setting. The following suggestions may be of some help.

1. Acquaint your students with the State Park setting problems that could be posed and discuss with them ways to avoid abuses of the environment.
2. Encourage students to "stick to paths" and established walkways of the Park.
3. Help establish a tradition whereby each class does at least one thing which contributes to the betterment of the environment during their time at the Laboratory.
4. Prevent chopping, cutting, and mutilation of trees and shrubs and avoid over collecting or exploitation of animal species.

THE TEACHER PARTICIPATION PLAN

It is only through the teacher participation plan that Suffolk County school districts place students in the Outdoor Learning Laboratories program during the school year.

In the spring prior to the school year concerned, the district makes reservations with BOCES for use of a specific site by a "learning unit" -- a learning unit consisting of a teacher, his or her class, and time block or time blocks totaling five school days in the day-use program or five school days and four nights in the residential program.

When reservations are firm, the district asks for individual teachers to take over the reservations for sites and time blocks.

The teachers who accept are invited to the Outdoor Learning Laboratories during the summer prior to the school year for inservice preparation in outdoor education.

Because no students can participate in the program unless accompained by a teacher who has successfully completed inservice, the teacher can appreciate the fact that his/her role in the program is central.

The teacher begins by participating in the day-use inservice program and then continues into the day-use implementation program on site. Later, he/she may participate in the residential inservice program at an overnight site. The teacher may also wish to participate in supplementary SCOPE inservice programs.

Day-Use Inservice

Inservice training for day-use of sites gives the teacher the following opportunities:

1. to gain an understanding of the principles of outdoor education.
2. to learn the site where they will be teaching.
3. to learn to develop effective curricula and teaching strategies for children.
4. to familiarize themselves with resources, equipment, and materials available from the Outdoor Learning Laboratory.
5. to learn the procedures by which the program operates.
6. to learn to utilize the school site as a resource for supplementary outdoor education activities in order to maximize the time spent at the Outdoor Learning Laboratory.

A minimum of 30 hours of inservice instruction is required of all participants. Day-use sessions are usually scheduled as follows: Five days during the summer prior to the school year at the Outdoor Learning Laboratory site at which the teacher will implement the program.

Inservice continues with individual or small group planning sessions held between the teacher(s) and the site Director. It is the responsibility of the teacher to call the Director to schedule a planning session one to two weeks prior to each of the five class trips. Planning sessions are generally conducted after school at the Laboratory site. In these afternoon sessions, the Director assists the teacher to determine objectives, organize plans, specify activities and list necessary equipment.

In cases where inclement weather is predicted, alternate rainy-day activities are planned. When the final plan is complete, the teacher is ready for site utilization.

Implementation of the Day-Use Program

The five days of class visitation to the Outdoor Learning Laboratory are usually distributed throughout the school year as follows: Two days in fall, one day in winter, one day in spring, one day in early summer. This plan enables the students to compare and contrast seasonal changes within the Parks. It is, however, the individual teacher's perrogative to divide the trips to meet the needs of his/her class. (i.e. various medical problems may make it necessary to schedule only warm weather trips, or back to back days may be helpful to reinforce concepts, etc.)

Implementing the Outdoor Learning Laboratory experience first requires making appropriate arrangements and following established procedures.

It is the responsibility of the teacher:

1. to make transportation accommodations and confirm them on the day prior to the Outdoor Learning Laboratory experience.

2. to provide the Outdoor Learning Laboratory with needed information such as student profile sheets and enrollment data.

3. to check all Laboratory equipment upon arrival and departure.

4. to make sure that students wear appropriate clothing.

5. to make sure that each student brings a lunch with his or her name clearly marked on the front. If a teacher wishes to provide a beverage for the class (i.e. hot chocolate, ice tea, etc.) it is his/her responsibility to bring mixes and cups and arrange for the Laboratory to have hot water available.

6. to clarify plans in classroom prior to site arrival (i.e. delegating responsibilities, assigning groups, etc.)

Upon arrival at the Outdoor Learning Laboratory site, the teacher informs the Director of actual student attendance, checks the equipment requested and asks students to pick up the equipment. Following plans clarified in the classroom ahead of time, the teacher expeditiously moves the students into the first stage of their outdoor experience.

In case of inclement weather, lesson plans are shifted to the indoor activities planned ahead of time. At the end of the day, the teacher checks in and accounts for equipment and materials used.

At all times, the teacher can rely on the support of staff personnel for aid in emergencies, for clarifying unforeseeable contingencies, and for providing materials and equipment. The teacher, however, is expected to be self-sufficient enough to avoid last-minute requests for ideas or materials.

A teacher's second or further year of day implementation should be prepared for by continued inservice, although an experienced teacher may be excused by staff from attendance at certain inservice sessions. However, if a teacher plans to utilize a different site, he or she must attend at least the site specific workshops conducted during inservice prior to the school year.

Residential Inservice and Implementation

Successful completion of inservice training and implementation of a day-use program qualifies a teacher for residential participation.

Residential Inservice

Although teacher preparation for managing overnight learning experiences for students is the same in principle as that for day experiences, the overnight situation offers additional opportunities and carries additional responsibilities; participation in a second type of inservice preparation is therefore required.

If the basic principles of teaching in the out-of-doors are understood, overnight inservice concentrates on use of the resources of the site, special equipment such as that which might be used in astronomy, night-time activities, and procedures relative to providing meals and housing.

Overnight inservice is scheduled as an early fall or early spring day(s) to be spent at the site chosen. As with day inservice, planning sessions precede overnight implementation. These are scheduled as group planning sessions usually conducted late afternoon or early evening at one or more of the day-use sites.

The goals and objectives of the residential program are:

1. to develop a greater awareness, understanding, and respect for the natural environment through an interdisciplinary approach to environmental studies.

2. to integrate environmental concepts into the instruction of English, math, social studies, science and the arts.

3. to utilize the land and water resources of other-than-school agencies for the instruction of students and the training of teachers.

4. to combine resources and coordinate programs of schools and other governmental agencies for the establishment of outdoor/environmental programs.

5. to provide an opportunity for students to study the impact of past events in the history of Long Island on the present.

6. to provide an opportunity for students to identify various specific characteristics and functions of organisms and associate the role of each within the ecosystem.

7. to provide an opportunity for students to compare and contrast natural and pristine environments with those modified by man.

The overall goal of the program is to provide natural settings, materials and teacher inservice education for the purpose of infusing environmental studies into the classroom and school.

Residential Implementation

Overnights will be calendared as five days and four nights running.

Overnight implementation requires making arrangements and following procedures parallel to but somewhat more complicated than those used in day implementation. Meals and meal preparation, provisions for bedding and adequate clothing are an added teacher responsibility. The teacher supplements learning experiences with social and recreational experiences.

As with day implementation, a teacher's second or further year of overnight implementation should be accompanied by overnight inservice, with the possibility of being excused from certain inservice sessions.

INSERVICE CREDIT FOR PARTICIPATING TEACHER

The teacher who successfully completes an inservice and implementation program, either day or overnight, is awarded a SCOPE certificate of completion of two equivalent academic hours. In two different years, a teacher may qualify for both certificates for a total of four credits. Criteria determining qualification for these certificates are the same as those determining qualification for any other inservice credits as spelled out in the general catalog of regional inservice workshops; these criteria include attendance requirements and performance levels judged satisfactory by the Outdoor Learning Laboratories staff.

A second or further year of day participation, or of overnight participation, does not entitle a teacher to additional credits. Additional credits may, of course, be obtained through completion of regional or subregional workshops.

TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMS

Saturday Optional Environmental Workshops

All teachers from SCOPE participating districts, whether or not currently participating in the Outdoor Learning Laboratories Program, are welcome to attend environmental tours, canoe trips, demonstrations, and other types of programs on Saturdays during the school year.

Regional and Subregional Environmental Workshops

All teachers affiliated with school districts participating in the SCOPE basic program are welcome to enroll in any of the numerous specialized environmental or other workshops offered through the SCOPE regular and spring supplement catalogs of regional inservice workshops.

School districts participating in the SCOPE basic program are welcome to request environmental or outdoor education workshops designed to meet local needs.